United Nations A/HRC/36/NGO/146

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 September 2017

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-sixth session
11-29 September 2017
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the International Career Support Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[01 September 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.17-15904(E)
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Request to the United Nations related to Comfort Women issue and special rapporteur

We request that the UN repeal the "Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.1)" dated 4 Jan 1996 written by Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, and to send another Special Rapporteur to Japan to investigate the factual situations through primary sources on the "comfort women."

There are many short-comings, sometimes pure falsification, in the above-mentioned report. First, the Special Rapporteur defines the "comfort women" as being military sexual slavery because, according to her, they were "forced to render sexual services."

However, the sources she used to support her claim are fictitious books and hearsay.

Two referenced books are "My War Crime: The Forced Draft of Koreans" by Yoshida Seiji, and "Comfort woman, sex slaves of the Japanese Imperial Force" by George Hicks. Yoshida Seiji, later admitted that his book was nothing but fiction and G. Hicks wrote his book largely based on Yoshida's book. Hicks also cites a book by Kim Il-myon, a resident of Japan with Democratic People's Republic of Korea sympathies, many times. However, most of Kim's assertions are unverified rumors. (Tsutomu Nishioka, "Behind the Comfort Women Controversy: How Lies Became Truth")

Also, many of the former comfort women's testimonies the Special Rapporteur quoted in the report are too far-fetched and far from the truth, but she failed to attempt to verify their stories.

Item 54 of the report quotes the testimony of a woman from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Chong Ok Sun, which was so horrifying and nauseous. As we all know, in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea political propaganda is more important than historical fact; yet, Coomaraswamy accepts Chong's testimony unconditionally without doing any fact-checking.

Second, the Special Rapporteur reported that there were 200,000 Korean comfort women and they were forced to have sex with, on average, 40 to 50 men a day. The mathematical calculation simply does not add up. If 200,000 women had sex with 40 men a day, there were supposed to be 8 million acts of sexual intercourses a day. How could that be possible while there were roughly 1.7 million soldiers at the Pacific Theater and they were there to fight, not to have sex! This clearly indicates that her report is not trust worthy. It is also obvious that she has confused the Women's Voluntary Service Corps with comfort women, but they were completely different.

Third, the report also mentions the statement of Kono Yohei dated 4 Aug 1993 that "comfort women were recruited against their will and had to live in misery at comfort stations in a coercive atmosphere." However, recent thorough investigation by the Government of Japan (GOJ) revealed that the wording used in the statement was the result of a political agreement between the GOJ and the Government of the Republic of Korea, and not a factual statement.
Fourth, throughout the report it indicates that "those women were not remunerated for their work as sex slaves."

However, the Report No. 49 of United States Office of War Information dated October 1, 1944, which interviewed 20 Korean comfort women states that "in an average month a girl would gross about fifteen hundred yen," and "the girls' gross earning depending on how much of a debt each girl had incurred when she signed her contract."

The fact that these women earned so much more in wages than Japanese soldiers did is a clear indication that they were far from "sex slaves." Nishioka also mentions another example in his book that "a former comfort woman named Moon Ok-ju made 12 deposits in her saving while she was working as a comfort woman and her account had a balance of 26,145 yen, a sum of money large enough to buy five houses in Tokyo in the 1940s."

Last but not the least, we would like to introduce Professor Park Yu-ha. She is a professor of literature at Sejong University, and wrote a book titled "Comfort Women of the Empire" in 2013. Based on historical documents and the testimonies of comfort women, she describes a more complex relationship between comfort women and soldiers, and criticized the recent interpretation of comfort women being labeled exclusively as sex slaves.

In an interview with the New York Times in April 2016, she also states the following:
The anti-Japanese activist group "Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery," which was formed by the Republic of Korea Communists and has strong ties with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is instigating the comfort women issue. The Council confined surviving women in the House of Nanumu, and these women were allowed to talk to outsiders only when they were needed to testify for the UN Special Rapporteur or United States of America politicians.

Further, these women were coached by the Council to give false testimonies. The Council used the comfort women issue for its political purpose, which is to drive a wedge into the US-Japan-Republic of Korea security partnership.

The mandate of the Special Rapporteur states that the investigation should be based on "factual situations as well as allegations which may be forwarded to the Special Rapporteur by concerned parties."

It seems that the Coomaraswamy report was geared too much on the allegations by concerned parties without substantial support by factual situations.

Since the time the report was published more than 20 years ago, some historical reports and new testimonies have been revealed and much research has been conducted. We sincerely hope that the UN will revise the Coomaraswamy report with a new, more fact-based report so that the two nations of Japan and the Republic of Korea can have a more fruitful and friendly relationship rather than a conflict ridden one, especially since the report was partially the cause of conflict over the past 20 years between the two nations.

A recent occurrence regarding the issue of comfort women is that in 2015 both governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea came to an agreement, during which they confirmed that the issue was "resolved finally and irreversibly" under the conditions that Japan would express remorse and offer a one-time contribution to a foundation set up by the Republic of Korea, and in return the Republic of Korea would acknowledge Japan's concerns about the statue of a girl erected in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul and "strive to solve this issue in an appropriate manner." Also, the Republic of Korea would refrain from accusing or criticizing Japan regarding this issue in the International community.

At the time of the agreement, there was hope that it would be a turning point for a renewed relationship between Japan and the Republic of Korea. Thus, Japan stuck to its deal and Prime Minister Abe expressed apologies and remorse, and contributed one billion yen to the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation set up by the Republic of Korea. Thirty six out of the 47 former comfort women still alive when the agreement was reached accepted 100 million won (about 9.7 million yen) each.

However, not only has the statue in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul not been removed but also a new statue has been erected outside the Japanese Consulate in Busan, which is a clear breach of the 2015 agreement. Further, the Moon administration recently released a five-year policy blueprint, and President Moon Jae-in announced that his administration intends to designate an official day of commemoration for comfort women starting next year, to build a research center dedicated to the victims in 2019, and to open a history museum in 2020.

In the international setting, the Korean people are busy setting up, or trying to set up, comfort woman statutes in different places in the world.

Recently, one was erected in a public park in Brookhaven in the U.S. No matter what Japan does, it seems that the Korean people are busy defaming Japan and instigating hatred in the hearts of people.

Yes, it is very regrettable that some women had to work as comfort women against their will because of whatever reasons there may have been. However, it is not fair to judge what the Japanese military did solely based on current standards not the standard custom of that time.

What they did was mainly to set up comfort stations to protect innocent girls from being raped, to prevent private brokers from engaging in immoral behaviour, and to provide medical services to prevent venereal deceases. Neither is it fair to blame only Japan while turning blind eyes to so many similar incidents occurred throughout world history.

It is high time to move on and deal with so many more problems the world faces these days, one of which is the serious threat we face from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

To achieve this purpose, we sincerely request that the UN will pressure the Government of the Republic of Korea to fulfill its end of the bilateral agreement of 2015 and not to be manipulated by the group supported by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and will act as a mediator between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Korea for a better relationship so that the two nations work as allies to combat the threat from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.